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(54) INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) EMERGENCY CONNECTIONS (ITEC) TELEPHONY

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **379/37**; 379/45

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An IP Telephony Emergency Connections (ITEC) system and method that determines the precise origin of an emergency call and routes the call to the proper Public Service Answering Point (PSAP). A source-based routing mechanism is provided in an IP telephony type network, such as a VoIP or IP over LAN/ATM. Emergency calls are routed to the correct PSAP jurisdiction. Each server/switch may include the mechanism such that the IP Telephony network can identify an E911 connection and egress to a public network at a point closest to the emergency call point of origin. Whenever an emergency number call is made, the call's origin is determined during call setup establishment. Every port or end user jack in the network is assigned a Source Group Index (SGI), which is a number or index representing each PSAP jurisdiction in the network. All ports/jacks within the same PSAP jurisdiction are assigned the same SGI. Users may be in different areas of multiple PSAP jurisdictions.

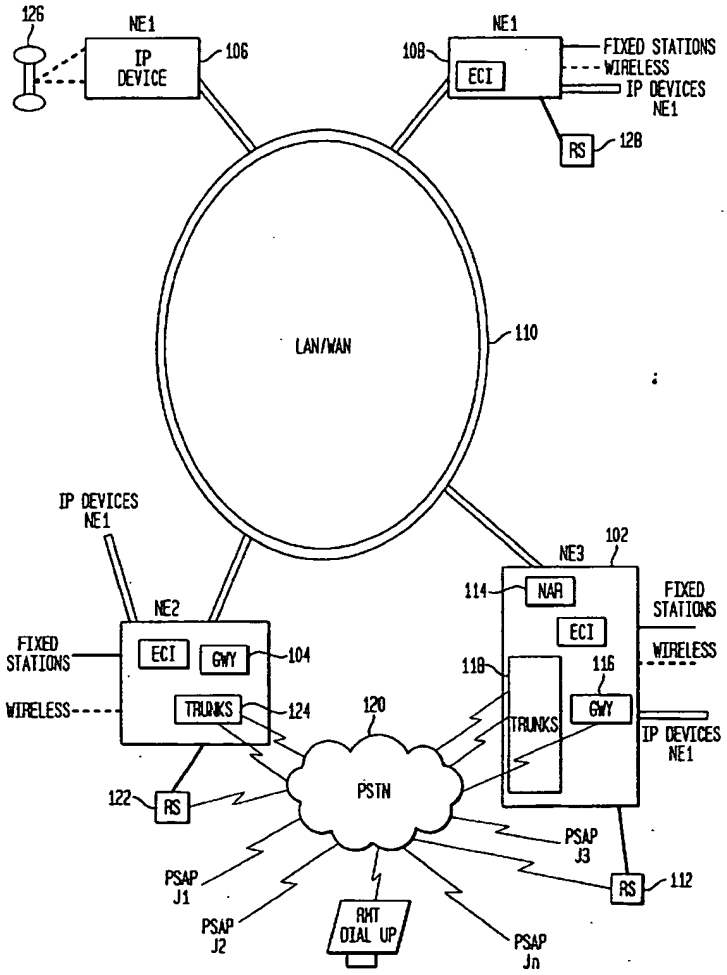


FIG. 1

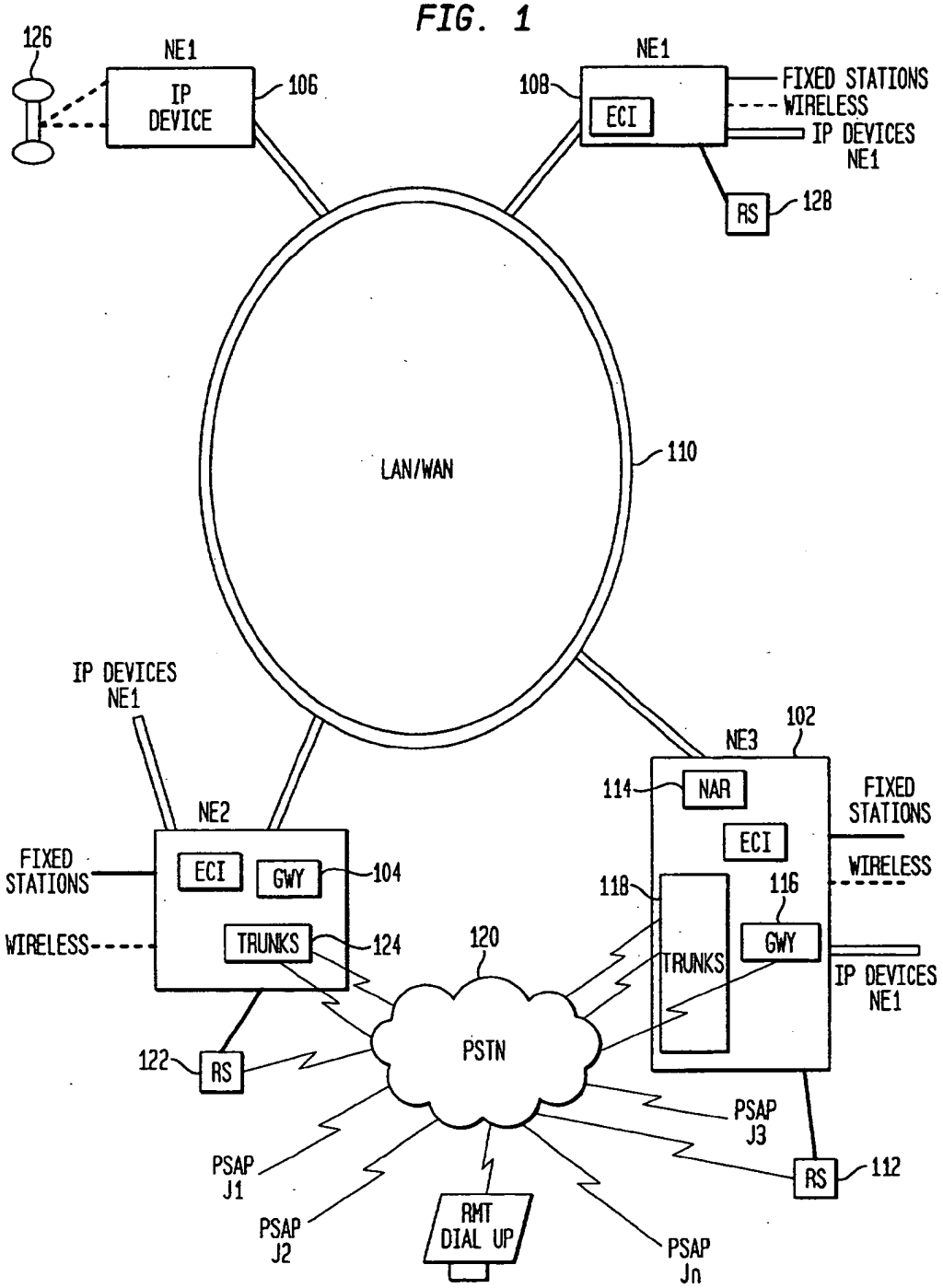

126
NE1
IP DEVICE
106
NE1
108
ECI
FIXED STATIONS
WIRELESS
IP DEVICES NE1
RS
128
LAN/WAN
110
IP DEVICES NE1
NE2
FIXED STATIONS
ECI
GWY
104
WIRELESS
TRUNKS
124
120
122
RS
PSTN
PSAP J1
PSAP J2
RMT DIAL UP
PSAP Jn
PSAP J3
102
NE3
114
NAR
ECI
FIXED STATIONS
WIRELESS
118
116
TRUNKS
GWY
IP DEVICES NE1
RS
112

FIG. 2

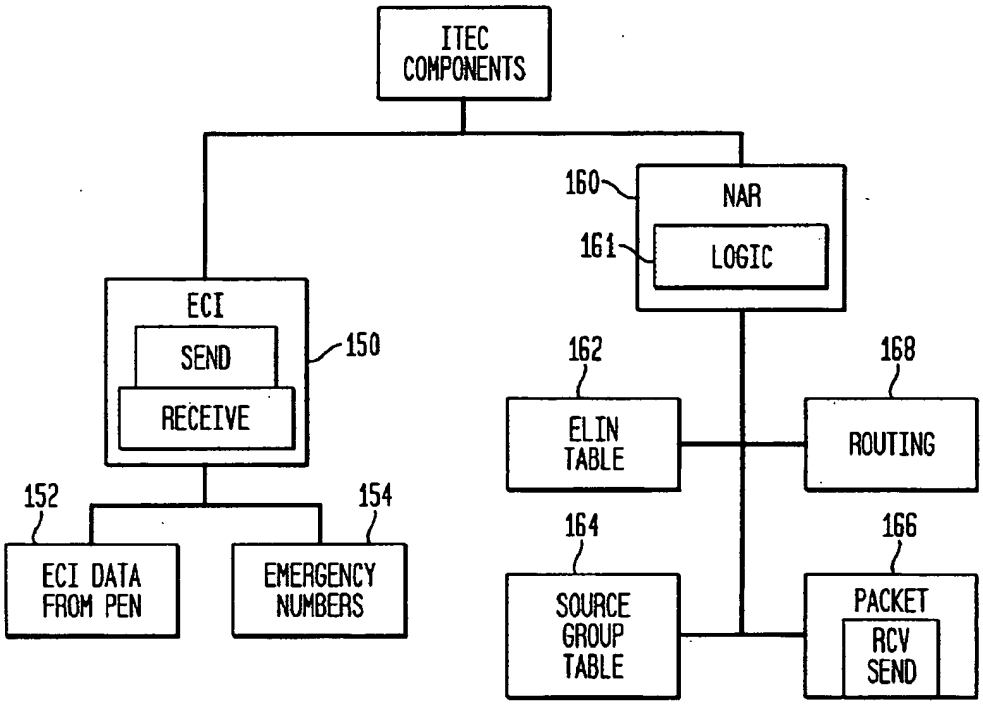
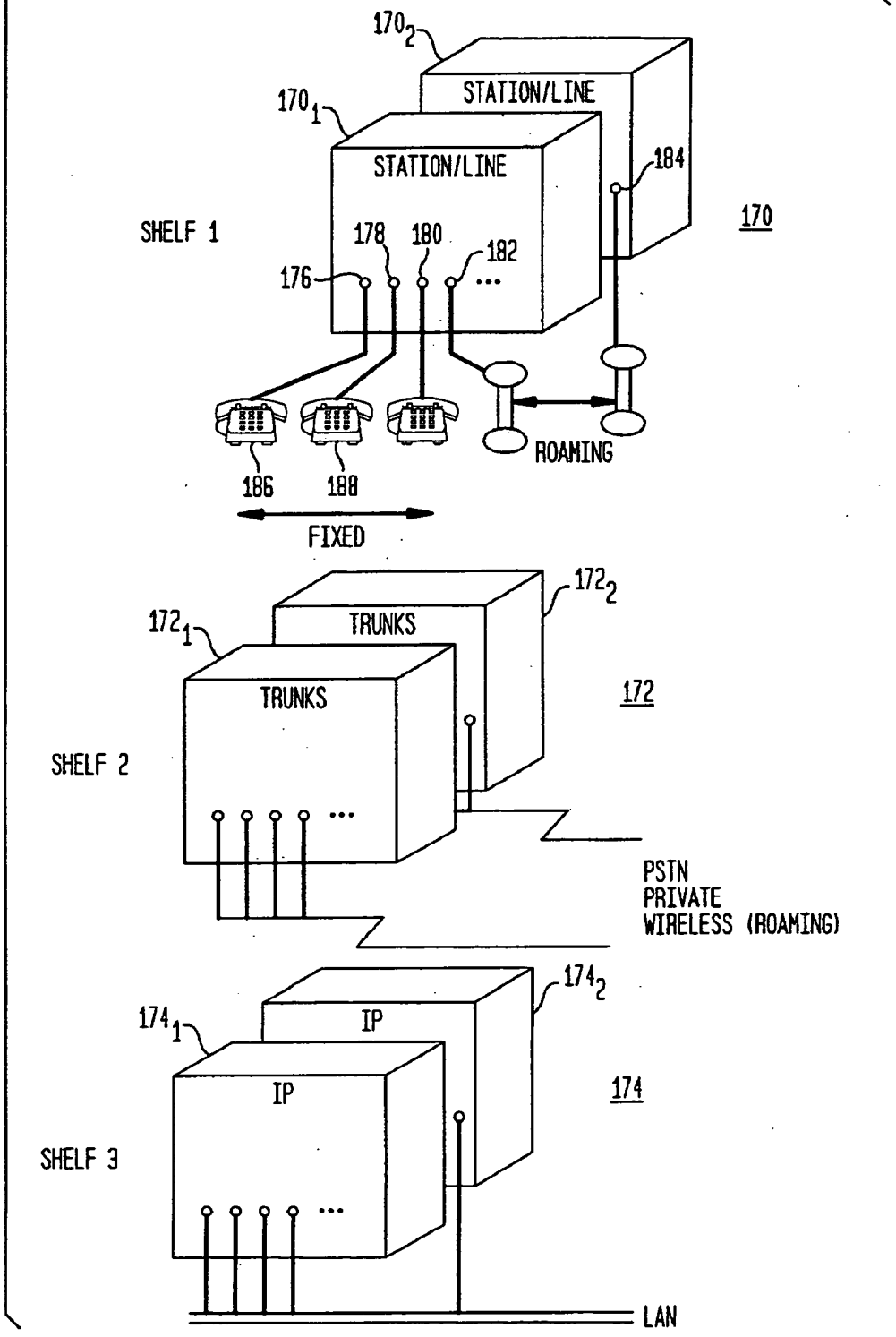

ITEC COMPONENTS
160
NAR
161
LOGIC
ECI
SEND
RECEIVE
150
162
168
ELIN TABLE
ROUTING
152
154
164
166
ECI DATA FROM PEN
EMERGENCY NUMBERS
SOURCE GROUP TABLE
PACKET
RCV SEND

FIG. 3


170_2
STATION/LINE
170_1
STATION/LINE
184
SHELF 1
178
180
182
176
170
186
188
ROAMING
FIXED
172_2
172_1
TRUNKS
TRUNKS
172
SHELF 2
PSTN
PRIVATE
WIRELESS (ROAMING)
174_2
174_1
IP
IP
174
SHELF 3
LAN

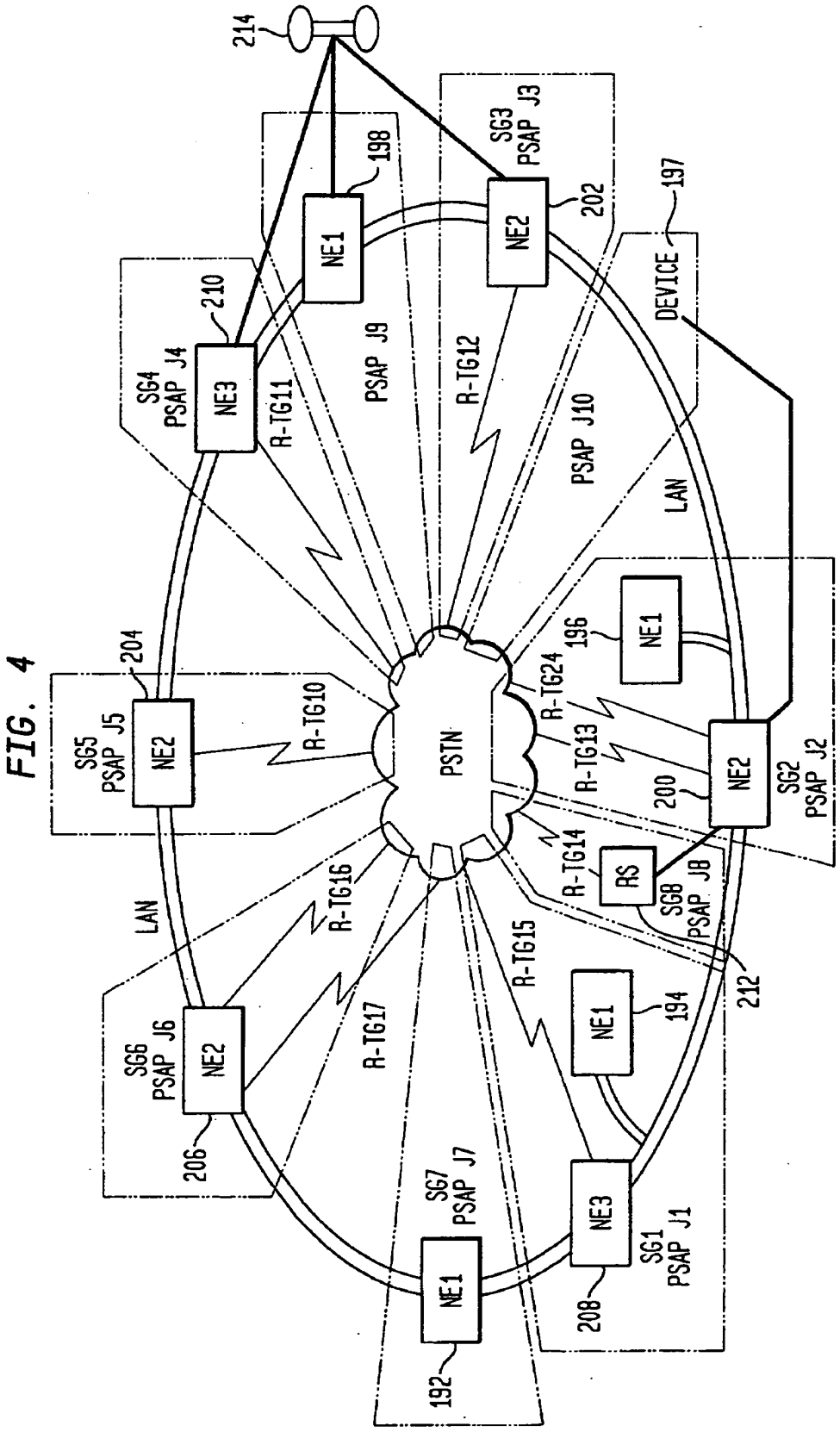

214
198
NE1
SG3
PSAP J3
NE2
202
197
DEVICE
210
SG4
PSAP J4
NE3
R-TG11
PSAP J9
R-TG12
PSAP J10
LAN
204
SG5
PSAP J5
NE2
R-TG10
PSTN
R-TG24
196
NE1
R-TG13
200
NE2
SG2
PSAP J2
R-TG14
RS
SG8
PSAP J8
212
R-TG16
LAN
R-TG15
R-TG17
SG6
PSAP J6
NE2
206
NE1
194
SG7
PSAP J7
NE3
SG1
PSAP J1
208
NE1
192

FIG. 4

FIG. 5A

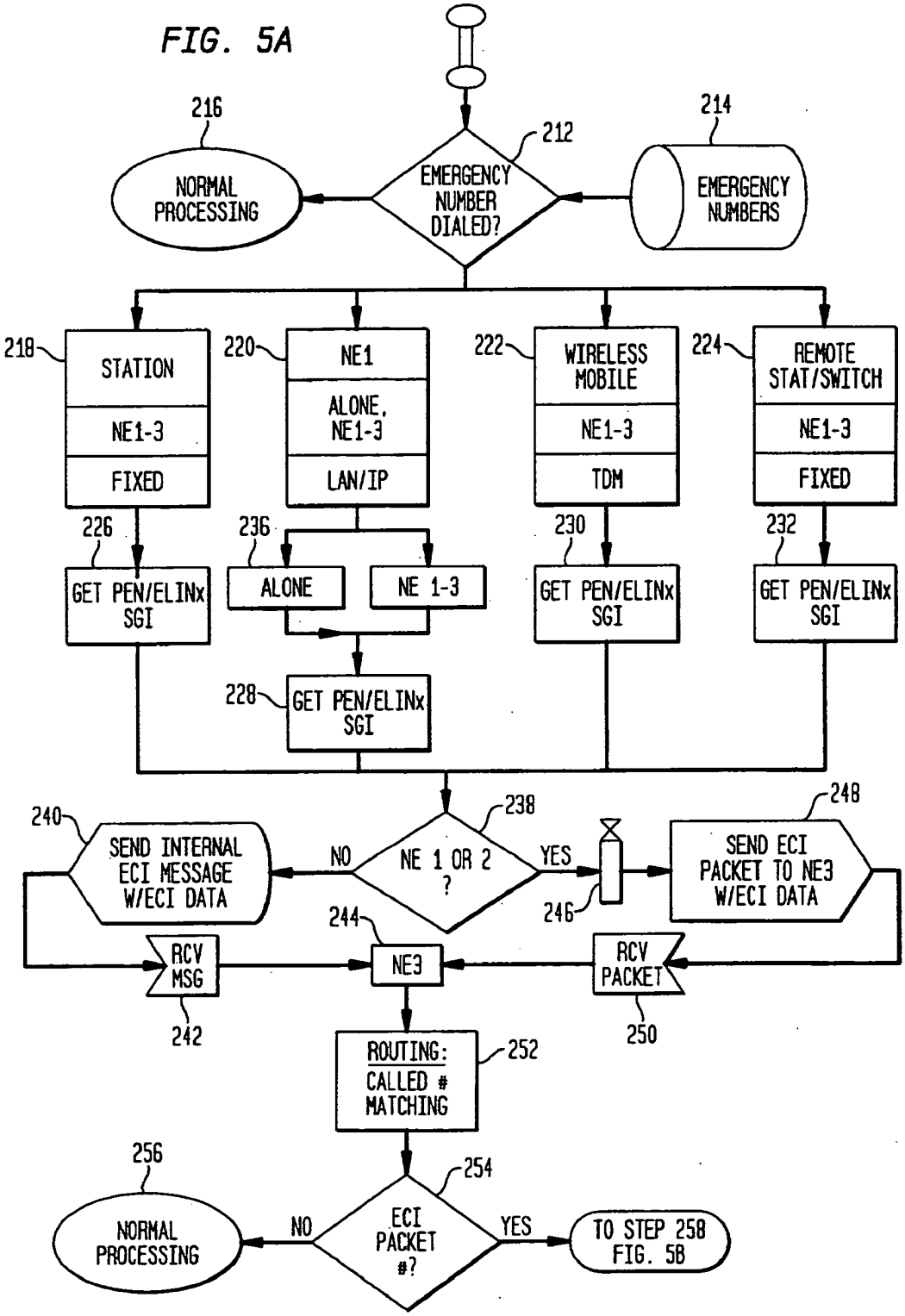
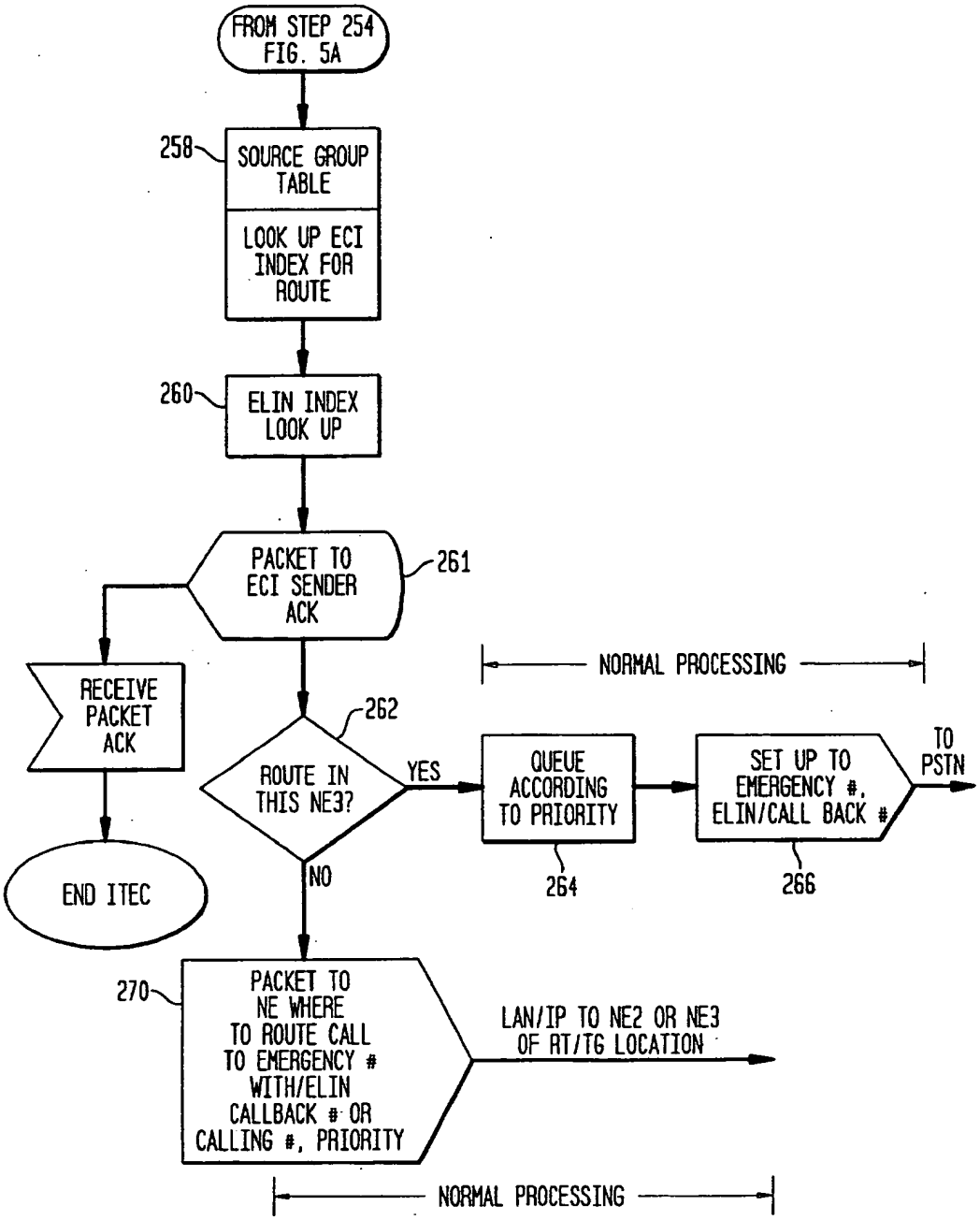

216
NORMAL PROCESSING
212
EMERGENCY NUMBER DIALED?
214
EMERGENCY NUMBERS
218
STATION
NE1-3
FIXED
220
NE1
ALONE, NE1-3
LAN/IP
222
WIRELESS MOBILE
NE1-3
TDM
224
REMOTE STAT/SWITCH
NE1-3
FIXED
226
GET PEN/ELINx SGI
236
ALONE
NE 1-3
230
GET PEN/ELINx SGI
232
GET PEN/ELINx SGI
228
GET PEN/ELINx SGI
238
NE 1 OR 2 ?
NO
YES
240
SEND INTERNAL ECI MESSAGE W/ECI DATA
246
248
SEND ECI PACKET TO NE3 W/ECI DATA
244
RCV MSG
NE3
RCV PACKET
242
250
ROUTING: CALLED # MATCHING
252
256
NORMAL PROCESSING
254
ECI PACKET #?
NO
YES
TO STEP 258 FIG. 5B

FIG. 5B


FROM STEP 254 FIG. 5A
258
SOURCE GROUP TABLE
LOOK UP ECI INDEX FOR ROUTE
260
ELIN INDEX LOOK UP
PACKET TO ECI SENDER ACK
261
NORMAL PROCESSING
RECEIVE PACKET ACK
262
ROUTE IN THIS NE3?
YES
QUEUE ACCORDING TO PRIORITY
SET UP TO EMERGENCY #, ELIN/CALL BACK #
TO PSTN
264
266
END ITEC
NO
270
PACKET TO NE WHERE TO ROUTE CALL TO EMERGENCY # WITH/ELIN CALLBACK # OR CALLING #, PRIORITY
LAN/IP TO NE2 OR NE3 OF RT/TG LOCATION
NORMAL PROCESSING

INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP) EMERGENCY CONNECTIONS (ITEC) TELEPHONY

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is related to co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,627 entitled "Priority Based Methods and Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multiline Telephone system (MLTS)"; co-owned, co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,380 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Over A Private Network Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind a Multiline Telephone System (MLTS); co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,823 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multi-Line Telephone System (MLTS) After An Emergency Caller Disconnects"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,838 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) After An Emergency Caller Disconnects"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/815,685 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Dialing An Emergency Telephone Number From A Teleworking Client Remotely Coupled To A PBX"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/815,468 entitled "System For Dialing An Emergency Telephone Number From A Teleworking Client Remotely Coupled To A PBX"; and co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,843 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multi-Line Telephone System (MLTS) Utilizing Port Equipment Numbers", the complete disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This invention relates to telecommunications systems, especially telecommunication systems capable of computer telephony such as voice over internet protocol (VoIP). Specifically, the invention relates to completing an emergency, e.g. 911, call from a station/device over a data network, e.g., a private corporate local area network (LAN/IP) or the Internet, to a public network emergency facility and delivering precise location information of the caller and a call back number based on a port equipment number associated with the port from which the emergency call originated.

[0004] 2. Brief Description of the Prior Art

[0005] When a caller calls an emergency number, e.g. 911 (E911), the call is routed to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). In some jurisdictions, regulatory agencies require that the caller's telephone number/callback number and/or precise physical location referred to as an Emergency Location Identification Number (ELIN), be automatically provided to the PSAP. The information in the ELIN is used to locate the caller and to call back to the caller should there be a disconnect.

[0006] A caller identification (i.e., telephone number and ELIN) may be delivered to the PSAP either in-band (e.g., using DTMF signaling) or out-of-band (e.g., using ISDN signaling) depending on the type of trunk circuit employed. Normally, for residential callers Caller ID number is sufficient for the PSAP. In some cases, the ELIN is geodetic, i.e. includes earth coordinates or geo-positional synchronous (GPS) data.

[0007] Digitally encoded voice communications that are transmitted over a network, using what is typically referred to as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) may originate anywhere and possibly, follow a circuitous convoluted route to a distant destination for far-end hop-off to a public service telephone network (PSTN). Thus, placing an E911 call over a VoIP enabled telephone network, may be a problem. Heretofore, there has not been a way in an IP network (e.g., voice over IP) to identify the source location of an originating device whose destination is 911 (or other emergency number) and to route the call to the proper PSAP jurisdiction (or other designated destination).

[0008] Thus, there is a need for a way to determine the proper destination PSAP of emergency calls in an IP network and further to correctly route an emergency call from the IP network to the public network of the appropriate PSAP.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] It is therefore a purpose of the invention to accurately report the emergency location of an emergency caller calling on a VoIP network to public safety personnel.

[0010] It is another purpose of the invention to accurately report the callback number of an emergency caller using VoIP to public safety personnel.

[0011] It is yet another purpose of the invention to accurately report the ELIN and callback number of a caller making an emergency call using VoIP to call a PSAP over a private network in a manner that does not interfere with features of the PBX/MLTS.

[0012] It is yet another purpose of the invention to locate an E911 caller from the source of the call, regardless of the call origination location including calls originating in an IP private network, and route the call to the most appropriate PSAP, closest to the caller.

[0013] The present invention is an IP Telephony Emergency Connections (ITEC) system and method that determines the precise origin of an emergency call and routes the call to the proper Public Service Answering Point (PSAP). A source-based routing mechanism is provided in an IP telephony type network, such as a Voice over IP (VoIP) or IP over Local Area Network/Asynchronous Transfer Mode (LAN/ATM). Emergency calls are routed to the correct PSAP jurisdiction. Emergency calls may include, but are not limited to voice calls. The routing mechanism may be deployed in any intelligent distributed or centralized network. For example, a server/switch at a gateway may include the mechanism such that the IP Telephony network can identify an E911 connection and egress to a public network at a point closest to the emergency call point of origin. Whenever a call is recognized as being an emergency number call, the call's origin is determined during call setup establishment. Every port or end user jack in the network is assigned a Source Group Index (SGI), regardless of whether a port is physical or logical, e.g., for multi-drop. An SGI is a number or index representing each PSAP jurisdiction in

the network. Port/jack level management granularity allows any server/switch to serve users that may be in different areas of multiple PSAP jurisdictions. So, all ports/jacks within the same PSAP jurisdiction are assigned the same SGI.

[0014] Advantageously, an emergency call made using VoIP is routed to the proper authorities. The routing can be provided at any network entity that is equipped with appropriate trunks, including the network entity where the call originated or, at a gateway located near the source of the call. This call handling circumvents normal call routing and may fulfill expected governmental requirements for emergency calls. Accordingly, emergency request information is sent to the correct PSAP regardless of where the user resides in an IP network.

[0015] Thus, the apparatus of the invention includes database management, emergency number detection, call routing and both ISDN and non-ISDN signaling. The present invention may be configured so that either the callback number, the ELIN, or both are transmitted to the PSAP. Further, the invention may be configured to recognize multiple emergency numbers and to give emergency calls priority over non-emergency calls.

[0016] Additional benefits and features of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed description taken together with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] **FIG. 1** shows an example of an overview of a preferred embodiment network with Voice over IP (VoIP) emergency call capability (IP Telephony Emergency Connections (ITEC)) according to the present invention;

[0018] **FIG. 2** shows an example of ITEC components of network elements of a preferred embodiment system according to the present invention;

[0019] **FIG. 3** shows an example of SGI and ELIN index port assignment for three shelves;

[0020] **FIG. 4** shows an example of various network entities distributed throughout different geographically distinct PSAP jurisdictions with corresponding routes and trunk group assignments;

[0021] FIGS. **5A-B** are a flow diagram showing how emergency numbers are processed according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] Turning now to the drawings and more particularly **FIG. 1** shows an example of an overview of a preferred embodiment network **100** with Voice over IP (VoIP) emergency call capability (IP Telephony Emergency Connections (ITEC)) according to the present invention. Essentially, ITEC is a source-based routing mechanism in an IP Telephony type network (e.g., voice over IP or IP over Local Area Network/Asynchronous Transfer Mode (LAN/ATM)) that determines the precise emergency call origin in a Public Service Answering Point (PSAP)) jurisdiction of an emergency call (including, but not limited to voice calls) and routes the call to the appropriate public safety personnel in that jurisdiction. This routing mechanism may be developed in an intelligent network routing entity **102, 104** with other network entities **106, 108** that are in communication with each other over Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) **110**. The intelligent network routing entity maybe distributed or centralized, for example, a server/switch, gateway **102, 104**, where the IP Telephony network can convert the emergency call connection (if required) and egress to a public network at a point closest to the point of origin of the call. Whenever a call is recognized as an emergency number, the preferred routing mechanism makes a call origin determination during call setup establishment. Each server/switch **102** may serve users that span multiple PSAP jurisdictions, so every port or end user jack in the network **100**, whether physical and/or logical e.g., for multi-drop, is assigned a Source Group Index (SGI). Each PSAP jurisdiction in the network is represented by one SGI and so, all ports/jacks within the same PSAP jurisdiction are assigned the same SGI.

[0023] All network entities, such as ethernet switches and servers, where users are attached to ports/jacks or where end user devices are attached to the IP network include a unique Emergency Connection Identifier (ECI) module. At least one Network Area Router (NAR) module (in server **102** in this example) provides database maintenance, administration and special messaging, i.e., packets and internal messages. The ECI modules and data may reside in one or more network entities.

[0024] For purposes of the description of the present invention, network entities may be categorized as belonging to one of three categories, NE1, NE2 or NE3. NE1 type devices include only an ECI module and do not include a gateway (GWY) or a centralized manager (MGR). NE2 type devices include both an ECI module and a gateway, but do not include a centralized manager. NE3 devices are Network Area Routers (NAR) that each include an ECI module, a gateway and a centralized manager. Thus, server **102** is an NE3 type network entity. Remote switch **104** is an NE2 type network entity. Devices **106, 108** are each NE1 type network entities.

[0025] Server **102** is shown with ports for fixed stations, wireless phones, IP devices and one or more remote stations **112** attached and in communication with the LAN/WAN **110** through network area router **114**. Both gateway **116** and trunks **118** are connected to a public service (or switched) telephone network (PSTN) **120**. Each remote station **112** is directly connected to PSTN **120**. Remote switch **104** is shown with ports for IP devices, fixed stations, wireless phones and one or more remote stations **122**. As an NE2 device, remote switch **104** includes the LAN/WAN **110** through a trunk **124** with the PSTN 120. So, in this example, network entity **106** is an internet protocol (IP) device, e.g., a communication device with an attached handset **126**. Device **108**, which is an NE1 type network entity, includes ports for various communication type devices such as remote station **128**, fixed stations, wireless devices and IP devices. The PSTN **120** is in telephonic communication with Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) jurisdictions (J1-Jn) that are located in each corresponding port location for each of the network entities **102, 104, 106, 108**.

[0026] Further, the PSTN **120** may be in communication with a remote dial-up Emergency Location identification Number Apparatus as described in co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,627 entitled "Priority Based

Methods and Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multiline Telephone system (MLTS)"; co-owned, co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,380 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Over A Private Network Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind a Multiline Telephone System (MLTS); co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,823 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multi-Line Telephone System (MLTS) After An Emergency Caller Disconnects"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,838 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) After An Emergency Caller Disconnects"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/815,685 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Dialing An Emergency Telephone Number From A Teleworking Client Remotely Coupled To A PBX"; co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/815,468 entitled "System For Dialing An Emergency Telephone Number From A Teleworking Client Remotely Coupled To A PBX"; and co-owned co-pending application Ser. No. 09/816,843 entitled "Methods And Apparatus For Transmitting Accurate Emergency Location Identification Numbers (ELINs) From Behind A Multi-Line Telephone System (MLTS) Utilizing Port Equipment Numbers", the complete disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference, and referred to generically hereinafter as ELIN references or an ELIN apparatus.

[0027] It is understood that the number of PSAPs involved depends on the location of ports connecting each individual fixed station, wireless device, IP device and remote station for each of the individual network entities **102, 104, 106, 108**. Each PSAP jurisdiction is a geographically distinct location, e.g., a county, a town, a city, a precinct, etc.) All ports/jacks, physically located within each jurisdiction must have the same SGI assigned for that particular region. Therefore, users may be attached to/move between the different network entities and the assigned SGI is based on the port to which they are physically connected. Emergency calls placed from each user are routed according to the SGI to the correct PSAP jurisdiction. Users connected to NE1 network entities **106, 108** are routed through server **102** or remote switch **104** to the PSTN **120** (i.e., whichever entity has access to the PSAP correct jurisdiction) and, thereafter, the call is directed to public safety personnel in jurisdiction, J1 . . . , Jn.

[0028] When a number is dialed, the ECI module checks an ECI emergency number table to determine if the number is an emergency call number as indicated by whether the dialed number is listed as such. If the dialed number is not found in the ECI table, the call is not processed by ITEC. However, if the number matches an emergency number in the ECI table, then, the ITEC processes the call and it is routed to a PSAP jurisdiction based on the originating port SGI. The NAR determines the route based on the port's SGI which is included in routing tables and routes emergency calls to egress to the proper PSAP jurisdiction. Preferably, the ECI modules are located in each individual network entity **102, 104, 106, 108**. However, all ECI modules may be located at a central processing entity, provided the PENs are unique network wide (e.g., prefixed with a network entity unique identifier).

[0029] **FIG. 2** shows an example of ITEC components of network elements of a preferred embodiment system according to the present invention. As noted above, each network element includes an emergency connection identifier (ECI) module **150** regardless of network element type. Further, at least one network element includes a network area router NAR **160**, i.e., NE3 type network element. The ECI module **150** both sends and receives messages and handles all communications between the NAR **160** and users at connected ports, regardless of whether the ECI module **150** and NAR **160** are in the same or separate network elements. Accordingly, the ECI module **150** also includes ECI data in an ECI data table **152** for each port in the network entity. An ECI table **152** entry is attached to any emergency messages that are sent from or received by the network entity. ECI data table **152** includes a port equipment number (PEN) field, a port source group index number (SGI) field and a local PSAP emergency location identifier number (ELINx) field. Also, the ECI module **150** includes an emergency number table **154** with a list of emergency numbers and associated priorities.

[0030] If the network entity is NE3 type, it includes network area router **160** and logic **161**. The NAR logic **161** routes messages to and from connected network entities as directed by each particular network entity's ECI module **150**. Accordingly, the network area router maintains an ELIN table **162**, a source group table **164**, an IP packet receive/send table **166** and a routing table **168**. The routing table **168** corresponds messages to a particular origination port as identified by the ECI data of the particular message.

[0031] Each ECI module **150** recognizes emergency calls that originate from the particular network entity in which the ECI module **150** resides. The ECI module **150** identifies each emergency call's SGI and other pertinent information (e.g., ELIN) and flags emergency calls for emergency priority. The ECI module **150** compares each call's destination digits to entries in an ECI emergency number table **154**. The ECI module **150** transmits a small data packet (or internal message when the NAR **160** and ECI module **150** reside in the same network entity) that includes the port's SGI, destination digits and other connection information to the NAR **160**. The NAR logic **160** processes each data packet (subject to normal retransmission handling) or internal message (if the ECI module **150** and NAR **160** are located together) in order to determine how the call should be switched. A call may be sent initially as data packets for partial packet switching and, then to a gateway for circuit-switching or, immediately to a local B-channel for circuit switching from the source entity. The routing instructions are returned to the sender ECI module **150** or an acknowledgment (ACK) may be sent when another gateway is to route the call. This message/packet exchange must be uniquely identified with each particular call.

[0032] **FIG. 3** shows an example of SGI and ELIN index port assignments for three shelves **170, 172, 174**. Each shelf **170, 172, 174** includes two slots indicated by a corresponding 1 or 2 subscript, e.g., 170_1, 170_2. Boards in each slot may be stations/lines, trunks or IP interfaces, for example. Ports **176, 178, 180, 182, 184** are shown, typically in each slot, e.g., on station/lines 170_1, 170_2 and so on. It should be noted that this is for example only and the present invention may be applied to any combination of slots or shelves.

TABLE 1

PEN	SGI	ELIN index	Comment
1-1-001	2	101	fixed station
1-2-005	2	220	IP device
1-3-001	8	125	RS
1-4-002	2	23	wireless phone

[0033] Table 1 is an example of an ECI PEN table, e.g., table **152** of **FIG. 2**. Port Equipment Numbers (PEN) point to the assigned ELIN and SGI for the particular port, where the port is ambiguous network wide. Port equipment numbers are assigned to each port and have the format: shelf number—slot number—port number. Thus, the number 2-11-111 indicates shelf number 2, slot number 11, port number 111. Typically fixed stations are in the same PSAP jurisdiction as the particular network entity and so, have the same SGI. If a station/device or RS extends into another PSAP jurisdiction, a different SGI index (i.e., the SGI for devices in that jurisdiction) is assigned. The ELIN index is as described in the ELIN references.

TABLE 2

Dialed #	Priority
9 1 1	1
9 9 1 1	1
9 9 3 1 1 1 1	3 e.g., local police station

[0034] Table 2 is an example of an ECI Emergency Number Table. Calls are assigned priority relative to normal everyday calls which may be given a lowest priority, e.g., priority 9. Emergency calls are typically given highest priority, priority one. So, for purposes of this example, one is the highest priority and nine is the lowest. Each call is assigned a unique call ID, e.g. a number generated from a random number generator. Any emergency number is flagged by the ECI data and does not include a routing number. When a call is made from a device at a network entity, the ECI module checks against an emergency number in the routing table. If the dialed number is an emergency number, then the ECI module processes the number. Otherwise the ECI module ignores the number and it is treated as a normal call.

[0035] In this example, shelf **170** has three ports assigned for fixed telephone, and additional ports are assigned for roaming connection, e.g., cellular phones. A remote station may also be connected to station/line boards **1701, 1702**. Fixed telephone **186** is assigned to SG1 and is located in a different PSAP jurisdiction than fixed telephone **188**, which is assigned to SG4. Trunks in shelf **172** connect to a PSTN and also provide private and wireless connections to the PSTN. The first port of shelf **172** is also shown in the same jurisdiction as fixed telephone **186** and so, is also assigned SG1. Shelf **174** is shown with port connections to a LAN. Each of the LAN port connections may be distributed in different jurisdictions and assigned, SG1, SG2, SG3 . . . , for example. An ECI message may be internal (when the ECI module is located on an NE3 type network entity) or over a signaling channel to an NE3 type network entity. Generally, an ECI packet includes an ECI packet type, a calling number (i.e., the user not the port number) a called number (the PSAP telephone number) a network-wide unique call ID and ECI data. As noted above ECI data may include the SGI and ELIN index. Optionally, a priority may also be included.

[0036] **FIG. 4** shows an example of various network entities distributed throughout different geographically distinct PSAP jurisdictions with corresponding routes and trunk group assignments. This example includes ten individual network entities **192-210**. Network entities **192, 194, 196** and **198** are NE1 type network entities. Network entities **200, 202, 204,** and **206** are NE2 type network entities. Network entities **208** and **210** are NE3 type network entities. For redundancy, multiple NE3 type network entities (2 in this example) may serve NE1 and NE2 type network entities. A remote station **212** and a mobile/wireless phone **214** are shown. These ten network entities **192-210** include ports that are distributed in ten individual PSAP jurisdictions designated J1-J10. Typically, network entities have ports in the PSAP jurisdiction in which they are located. However, network entity **200** also includes ports in two other jurisdictions, including jurisdiction J2, J8 and J10. Network entity **206** includes ports in jurisdictions J6 and J7. Mobile phone **214** is potentially in connection with each of network entities **198** and **202** and **210** because of its roaming capability, e.g., handoff from one network entity **198, 202, 210** to another. Therefore, mobile phone **214** may be in each of jurisdictions J3, J9 and J4, respectively.

[0037] Accordingly, an emergency call may be made from a network port on network entity **200** where the port resides in jurisdiction J10. Relevant call information is passed over the IP network to one of NE3 **208** or **210**, depending upon which is controlling NE2 **200** at the time of the call. An emergency call from device **197** is signaled through NE2 **200** which has access to PSAP J10. The emergency call is relayed to the PSAP jurisdiction in J10. Likewise an emergency call made from network entity **194** in jurisdiction J1 is passed to network entity **208** which is a network area router. Network area router **208** passes the call to the PSTN to make the connection to the PSAP in J1. Also, an emergency call made from network entity **192** in jurisdiction J7 is signaled through network area router **208** to take route 17 from network entity **206** where the call is made, i.e., to the PSAP jurisdiction in **J7**.

[0038] So, for every PSAP jurisdiction where users reside in the IP network, at least one gateway (capable of switching a connection between IP network and PSTN technology, CAMA or ISDN) also must exist within that area. This gateway serves calls originating in that PSAP by either routing local calls to the PSTN or converting arriving emergency calls from IP packets to circuit-switched technology for egress to the public network.

TABLE 4

Dial Pattern	Rt #	Priority	Comments
1 2 3 4	Rt 55	9	normal call
9 1 1	Go to SG Table	ECI data	ITEC call
9 9 1 1	Go to SG Table	ECI data	ITEC call
9 9 3 1 1 1 1	Go to SG Table	ECI data	ITEC call

[0039] Table 4 is an example of a NAR routing table with emergency call number entry examples. Each call number entry in this example includes a dial pattern, ECI data (SGI priority), a route number and a priority number. In this example a first dial pattern **1234** represents any DID number, for example, and the ECI data field indicates that the number is not an emergency number. This first dial pattern is associated with a route number 55 and given a low priority, 9, in this example. The following three entries are examples of emergency numbers. If an emergency number is dialed and matches one of these three the dial patterns, then, the corresponding ECI data indicates that the entry is an emergency number and must be handled by the ECI module. A typical United States emergency number, 911, is the second entry in the routing table. It is understood that any number may be selected as an emergency dial number. A corresponding ECI data entry for this second dial pattern may be a Y, indicating yes. The following dial pattern entry is 9911 corresponding to dialing 911 externally to a PBX, e.g., dialing 9 for an external line followed by 911. The final dial pattern entry is 999, which is also shown as in this example as corresponding to an emergency number and may include a Y in the corresponding ECI data field.

TABLE 5

Index	Rt #	Comment
0	.	Reserved
	.	
	.	
1	15	
2	13	Mobile, Station, IP call 911 from NE 2, PSAP J2
.	.	
.	.	
.	.	
8	14	RS called 993111 (local police), PSAP J8
.		
.		
.		

[0040] Table 5 shows an example of a Source Group Table with reference to the configuration and topology of the example of **FIG. 4** that corresponds each source group index with a route number. In this example, source group index 0 is reserved for IP devices that are not directly connected to a network entity of the private IP network. These indirectly connected IP devices cannot ordinarily be located by a PEN-SGI-ELINx and so, in this example, they signal location information to a NE3 type network entity as SG0. This signaling may be by using a pre-programmed speed dial key or by providing GPS information, for example. Either type of signaling requires that the received information be processed to extract the correct call routing to the appropriate PSAP. Typically, can ELIN is not available from indirectly connected IP devices and so, inclusion of a callback number in the signaling is essential. Source group index 2 indicates that a emergency call has been placed from a geographical location served by route number 13 and, as indicated by the corresponding comments, that the call is an emergency call from a station in PSAP jurisdiction J2, e.g., a mobile phone, a local phone or a local IP phone.

TABLE 6

Index	ELIN	TYPE	Callback #	Other table elements
0	1002001000	1	5619235000	N/A
1	1002001001	9	9547301000	N/A
2	1002001002	9	calling party #	N/A
.				
.				
.				

[0041] Table 6 is an example of an ELIN index table as described in the ELIN references and is shown for example only.

[0042] FIGS. **5**A-B show a flow diagram of how emergency numbers are processed according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention. In step **212**, a user dials a number that is checked against listed emergency numbers **214** to determine if it is an emergency number. If not, processing continues as normal in **216**. Otherwise, the number is: an emergency number at one of a fixed station connected to a network entity **218**; at a network entity dialed directly connected to the network **220**; at a wireless or mobile phone in communication with a network entity **222** using for example time division multiplex (TDM); or, at a remote station or switch **224** in communication with a network entity. Upon receiving the number, the particular ECI module identifies the originating port in a respective one of step **226**, **228**, **230**, or **232**. So, for each connected port, the PEN, ELIN index, and the corresponding SGI number are identified. If the originating port is connected directly to the network and not to a network entity, then this is noted in step **236** and processing depends upon whether the device provides the selected indirect device SGI (e.g., SG0), appropriate callback number and available location data (e.g., GPS). Otherwise, however, at this point emergency calls that originate from a port connected to a network entity other than a network area router (i.e., an NE3 type network entity) are routed by a network area router according to source group number and ELINx, if available.

[0043] So, the call is checked in step **238** to determine whether it originates at a network area router or originates at an NE1 or NE2 type of network entity. If the call originates at a network area router port, then, in step **240** the call generates an internal message and is treated as such in step **242** and passed to the network area router in step **244**. If, however, in step **238** it is determined that the call originates from an NE1 or NE2 type network entity, then, in step **246** the message is encoded as an IP packet with data link control, and transported via the IP physical layer. In step **248** a network wide unique call ID is assigned to the IP message, which includes the ECI data, and is sent as an emergency call request packet to the network address router. In step **250** the packet is received and passed to the network area router in step **244**. In step **252** the called number is matched with a digit pattern in the routing table. In step **254** if the call is not associated with an ECI, it is treated as a normal call. Otherwise, it is treated as an emergency call.

[0044] Otherwise, in step **258** the ECI index is retrieved from the source group table. In step **260** the call back number and ELIN number are retrieved from the ELIN table. In step **261** an acknowledgment packet is sent to the ECI module in the originating network entity. Next, in step

262 a check determines if the source group number corresponds to a PSAP jurisdiction as a local to the network area router. If the PSAP jurisdiction is local to the network area router, then, in step 264 the call is queued according to priority number. In step 266, the queued call is placed to the local PSAP. So, a connection is made to the emergency number at the local PSAP jurisdiction and, the ELIN call back number is passed, for example over an ISDN network, to the local PSAP jurisdiction. If however, in step 262 it is determined that the PSAP jurisdiction is not local to the router, then in step 270, an NE2 or NE3 type network entity that is local to the emergency call source is identified and, the network area router sends the packet to the identified NE2 or NE3 type network entity.

[0045] According to the present invention in the context of the aforementioned examples, the call may be routed directly to the public network or, first transit over the private network (via one or more other MLTS) to a far end "hop off" to the public network. The private network route may include ISDN (e.g., QSIG/PSS1) or analog tie trunks.

[0046] Furthermore, according to the invention, the ELIN/callback number is sent with each emergency call over the private network, and then, to a public gateway multi line telephone system (MLTS). Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) signals are encoded and passed over analog tie and facility IE Application Data Protocol Units (APDU) and are implementation dependent private extensions on a private network. The MLTS may send the emergency call and ELIN/callback number via an ISDN PRI or an analog Centralized Automatic Message Accounting (CAMA) trunk to the public network. In either case, the Central Office receives the necessary information and routes each emergency call to the proper 911 Tandem Office which routes the call to the appropriate PSAP.

[0047] While the invention has been described in terms of preferred embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention can be practiced with modification within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing an emergency call made from a device connected to a network entity on a private network, said private network including one or more network entities, said method comprising the steps of:

a) assigning a source group index (SGI) to each network entity port;

b) identifying emergency calls;

c) determining an origination port for each identified port emergency call;

d) identifying a public safety answering point (PSAP) jurisdiction corresponding to the SGI assigned to each determined origination port; and

e) connecting each identified emergency call with a corresponding identified PSAP.

2. A method as in claim 1 wherein said emergency call is a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) call and the step (b) of identifying emergency calls comprises the steps of:

i) comparing a dialed number for each call with known emergency numbers; and

ii) sending an emergency connection identifier (ECI) packet to a network area router (NAR) for a dialed number matching a known emergency number.

3. A method as in claim 2 wherein the ECI message includes an ECI packet type, a calling number, a called number, a call ID number and ECI data.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the ECI data includes the SGI assigned to said origination port of said identified emergency call and an emergency location identification number (ELIN) index number.

5. A method as in claim 4 wherein the ECI packet further includes call priority.

6. A method as in claim 5 wherein call priority is determined in the step (i) of comparing the dialed number with known emergency numbers.

7. A method as in claim 6 wherein identified emergency calls are queued according to said call priority.

8. A method as in claim 4 wherein the PSAP jurisdiction is identified by a route number retrieved from a source group table and corresponding to said SGI assigned to said identified emergency call.

9. A method as in claim 8 wherein the route number corresponds to the identified emergency call to said PSAP jurisdiction.

10. A method as in claim 9 further comprising the step of:

(f) sending an acknowledgment from said NAR to an ECI module located at said origination port.

11. A network including an apparatus for processing emergency calls made from connected devices, said network comprising:

a plurality of network entities communicating with each other;

a plurality of devices connected to said network entities, at least one network entity having two or more connected said devices;

a network area router (NAR) in at least one network entity; and

an emergency connection identifier (ECI) module in at least one network entity with one or more ports, said ECI module in communication with said NAR, said ECI module identifying emergency calls made from devices connected to said one or more ports and forwarding identified emergency calls to said NAR, said NAR identifying a public safety access point (PSAP) corresponding to a point of origin of each identified emergency call and forwarding said each identified emergency call to said PSAP.

12. A network as in claim 11 wherein said ECI module comprises:

an emergency number table including one or more series of dialed numbers corresponding to emergency telephone numbers; and

an ECI port equipment number (PEN) table including port equipment numbers for ports located in said network entity in which said ECI module is located and corresponding each said PEN with a source group index (SGI) number, said SGI number corresponding to a PSAP jurisdiction.

13. A network as in claim 12 wherein the ECI emergency number table further includes priority numbers corresponding to said emergency numbers.

14. A network as in claim 13 wherein said ECI PEN table further includes an ELIN index corresponding to each PEN entry.

15. A network as in claim 12 wherein the NAR includes a routing table, a source group table and an ELIN table.

16. A network as in claim 15 wherein said routing table provides a routing for identified dialed emergency numbers.

17. A network as in claim 16 wherein the source group table indicates a route number for each SGI number.

18. A network as in claim 12 wherein said at least one ECI module is two or more ECI modules, at least one of said two or more ECI modules is located on a common network entity with said NAR.

19. A network as in claim 18 wherein at least one network entity includes ports located in two or more PSAP jurisdictions.

20. A network as in claim 18 wherein said common network entity includes a gateway in communication with a public service telephone network (PSTN).

21. A network as in claim **20** wherein at least one other of said plurality of network entities includes an ECI module and a gateway in communication with said PSTN.

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